

So as America goes back to school and Congress returns from its summer recess, our elected representatives have this big assignment and other important ones, as well. First, we must show we have learned the lessons of Littleton. To protect our children, Congress must pass commonsense measures to prevent youth violence and keep guns out of the wrong hands.

Now a full month has passed since House and Senate conferees met to work on this legislation; nearly 5 months since the shootings at Columbine. I'm still waiting, and America is still waiting for Congress to act. It shouldn't take another tragedy to shake them from the summer slumber.

Today I'm sending a letter to the Republican leadership urging Congress to take immediate action to send me a balanced bipartisan juvenile crime bill that closes the gun show loophole, requires child safety locks for guns, and bans the importation of large-capacity ammunition clips. If Congress passes it, I'll sign it.

To protect the 160 million Americans who rely on managed care, Congress should pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. There's a bipartisan bill ready for action. The American Medical Association has endorsed it. So have more than 200 other medical and consumer organizations. It's high time for Congress to act, and if Congress passes it, I'll sign it.

With the number of students at historic levels, Congress should make the investments in education our children deserve. Here again legislation is ready. As part of my balanced budget, I've proposed to build new schools and fix old ones across our land. Congress should pass the proposal and fulfill the commitment it made last year to hire 100,000 well-prepared teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. Congress should also pass my proposal to stop social promotion and provide more funds for after-school and summer school programs and to turn around failing schools. If Congress passes these important educational measures, I'll sign them.

Maintaining our prosperity, paying down the debt, saving Social Security and Medicare, protecting our children, protecting patients' rights, bringing success to struggling communities and to all our children—these

are big assignments. But in every one of these areas, there is legislation ready for approval, ready for my signature, as soon as Congress proves it's ready to act.

If we work together in the weeks and months ahead, we can make this season not only one of action but of real achievement for the American people.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at noon on September 3 at Belle H. Waterman Elementary School in Skaneateles, NY, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 3 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Juvenile Crime Legislation

September 3, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

As the Congress returns this coming week, I urge you to make it your first order of business to send me a juvenile crime bill that includes the Senate-passed gun measures.

The time is long past due to complete work on this bill. Before the Congress went on its recess, I asked the conferees to meet during the break and finish work on the bill. A full month has passed since the conferees first met, and I urge you now to finish the job and act immediately on this vital legislation.

The tragic shooting in Los Angeles just a few short weeks ago is the latest reminder that we must do all we can to keep guns out of the wrong hands. You have the opportunity to send me a balanced and bipartisan juvenile crime bill that helps prevent youth violence and includes the Senate-passed gun provisions to close the gun show loophole, require child safety locks for guns, and bar the importation of large capacity ammunition clips. These provisions will help save lives, and the Congress should make them the law of the land without further delay.

As millions of our Nation's children return to school, we have a responsibility to do everything we can, as quickly as we can, to

keep them safe. The American people are waiting: don't let another day pass.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Trent Lott, Senate majority leader. This letter was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on September 4. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at Camp David, Maryland, and an Exchange With Reporters

September 4, 1999

Middle East Peace Process

The President. The new agreement which will be signed today between the Israelis and the Palestinians represents a wonderful opportunity to move the peace process forward. It is a product of hard work and the growing understanding by Israelis and Palestinians alike that the fulfillment of one side's aspirations must come with, and not at the expense of, the fulfillment of the other side's dreams.

The two sides have both strong positions to be reconciled and shared interests to be pursued together. They know there's no sense in an endless tug-of-war over common ground.

The United States has been honored to support these efforts for peace, from the signing of the Oslo agreement on the White House lawn almost exactly 6 years ago, to the Wye River accords achieved with the help of the late King Hussein, to the peace between Israel and Jordan itself in 1994, down to the present agreement. Our success in these endeavors, of course, goes back to the Camp David accords under President Carter in 1978.

Today I want to pay tribute to Prime Minister Barak for fulfilling his promise to seek a just and lasting peace for the people of Israel and to Chairman Arafat for his courage in taking yet another step toward mutual respect and recognition. I am grateful for Egyptian President Mubarak's extraordinary efforts in this instance. He had a critical role in facilitating this agreement. And, of course, I want to say a special word of thanks to Secretary Albright and her team for going the

extra mile to help the parties bridge their final gaps and reach consensus.

There is much hard work ahead for all of us. The United States pledged in the Wye River accords that we would help both sides minimize the risks of peace and we would help to lift the lives of the Palestinians. I ask Congress now to provide the funds we need to keep that promise.

Final status talks are now set to begin. We will do everything we can to be supportive all along the way and to achieve our larger goal—a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the entire region, including Syria and Lebanon. I hope today's progress is seen by leaders in the Middle East as a stepping stone toward that larger goal. Our commitment to reaching it will never waver.

Thank you very much.

Reinvestigation of 1993 Waco Incident

Q. Mr. President, were you concerned that incendiary devices were used at Waco—or are you concerned?

The President. Well, let me say I support the Attorney General's decision to seek an independent investigation, and I think that's what ought to happen and we ought to see what the investigation turns up. We ought to find out what the truth is and let you and the American people know.

Q. Do you still have confidence in the Attorney General and the Director of the FBI?

The President. Yes, I certainly have confidence in the Attorney General. You know, she's told us what happened; and she's told us she asked some questions that she didn't get the right answers to.

And I think that with regard to the Director, I don't think that it's—there is going to be an independent investigation, which she supports and which he has said he supports. I don't think it serves any purpose for the rest of us to assign blame until the investigation is conducted and the evidence is in. I think he did the right thing in saying he thought there ought to be an independent investigation, and I think that that's all we can ask of him. And she is now going to appoint an appropriate person to do it, and I think we ought to let them do their job.